



EDWARD RUSHTON, ESQUIRE.

RETURN to an Address of the Honourable The House of Commons,
dated 26 April 1849—*per*,

"COPY of a LETTER addressed to Her Majesty's SECRETARY of STATE for
the HOME DEPARTMENT, by *Edward Rushton*, Esquire, Stipendiary
Magistrate of *Liverpool*, bearing date 21st April 1849."

I HEREBY certify that the annexed is a true copy.

Whitehall, }
29 April 1849. }

G. CORNEWALL LEWIS.

Sir,

Liverpool, 21 April 1849.

At the request of a Deputation of the Finance Committee of the Council, and also of the Select Vestry of this borough, I have undertaken to represent to you the results of the Irish immigration into the town of Liverpool, and to suggest, on behalf of the authorities already named, measures which in their opinions would tend to lessen the burthen on the public resources of the borough and parish of Liverpool. I am perfectly aware, from my former communications with you, that many of the facts which I shall have to state are already known to you; but I am induced to recapitulate them, in order to place before you, in one letter, a general outline of the evils of which the people here most loudly complain.

You have already heard from me, that between the 13th day of January and the 13th day of December 1847, both days inclusive, 296,231 persons landed in this port from Ireland. Of this vast number about 130,000 emigrated to the United States; that some 50,000 were passengers on business, and the remainder were paupers, half naked and starving, landed for the most part during the winter, and becoming immediately on landing applicants for parochial relief. You already know the immediate results of this accumulation of misery in the crowded town of Liverpool; of the cost of relief at once rendered necessary to prevent the thousands of hungry and naked Irish perishing in our streets; and also of the cost of the pestilence which generally follows in the train of famine and misery such as we then had to encounter. I do not enter into the details of this misery further than to say that, though the pecuniary cost to the town of Liverpool was enormous, the loss of valuable lives was yet much more to be deplored; hundreds of patients perished notwithstanding all efforts made to save them; and 10 Roman Catholic and one Protestant clergymen, many parochial officers, and many medical men, who devoted themselves to the task of alleviating the sufferings of the wretched, died in the discharge of those high duties.

I believe I have, in my former letters to you, stated my conviction that the pressure of this miserable population would materially affect the health and character of our own labouring classes; my worst anticipations have been realized. I am unfortunately enabled, by the results of my daily experience, to show you how much the health of the people has suffered; and I am also enabled, by exact details, to show you how greatly the Irish misery has increased crime in Liverpool. In the year 1846, 18,171 prisoners were brought before the police court; in 1847 the number increased to 19,719; and in 1848 a further increase took place, and the numbers were 22,036. In the year 1845 the number of persons committed for trial and summarily convicted for felony, amounted to 3,889; in 1846 the number increased to 4,740; in 1847, to 6,510; and in 1848, to 7,714. I do not possess the means of accurately distinguishing the countries to which the criminals belong before the year 1848. Previous to that time I had, however, directed my attention to the subject, and I saw from day to day that the poor Irish
population

population forced upon us in a state of wretchedness which cannot be described, would, within 12 hours after they landed, be found among one of three classes; viz., paupers, vagrants, or thieves. Few become claimants for parochial relief, for in that case they soon discovered they might be at once sent back to Ireland. Many of these forlorn creatures become beggars; many of them thieves. The number of Irish brought as prisoners into the police court during the year 1848, was 8,794; the number of Irish sent to trial or summarily convicted of felony during the same period, was 4,661; the English during the same period, were 5,104. Now the Irish form but about one-fourth of the population, and yet they give very nearly half the criminals. The truth is, that gaols, such as the gaol of the borough of Liverpool, afford the wretched and unfortunate Irish better food, shelter and raiment, and more cleanliness, than it is to be feared many of them ever experienced elsewhere; and hence it constantly happens that Irish vagrants who have offered to them the choice of being sent to Ireland or to gaol, in a great majority of cases desire to go to prison; the fact being that the English gaols are excellent winter quarters for starving Irish paupers; and, in consequence, the gaol of Liverpool, which ought never to contain more than 500 prisoners, has now 1,100 within its walls; the cost of all this to the people of Liverpool, both in the augmentation of parochial and of legal charges, is absolutely enormous. It cannot be surprising that the people of this place, who find the rates for the relief of the poor daily augmenting, can be satisfied under the pressure which they sustain; and the parishioners of Liverpool think they have a claim to such relief from their present intolerable burthens, as may be fair and practicable. Beyond all doubt the towns on the sea coast in Ireland, and many of the landed proprietors in Ireland, furnish the wretched Irish with the means of coming to Liverpool. I have often discovered this from the examination of the poor; and only the other day an Irish offender, when asked where he came from, said he was sent with 1s. from the Irish workhouse to Liverpool. These poor people are brought from Ireland in crowds, on deck, even in most inclement weather; unfortunately few of us remember more severe weather in April than during the last week; yet, from the 14th to the 19th instant, 4,412 deck passengers arrived in Liverpool from Ireland.

The people here think it right, under these circumstances, that they should have more protection than the existing law affords. In the first place, they think that the provisions of the Act for the removal of Irish poor should be enlarged, so as to render all Irish persons who have been once removed to Ireland under the powers of that Act, and who again return to England and become chargeable, liable to be punished as rogues and vagabonds; and they also think that powers ought to be given to remove to Ireland not only those who become chargeable by receiving parochial relief, but also all who are found begging, or who have been convicted of felony. It is also deemed absolutely necessary that the Board of Trade should at once enforce, by the granting of certificates under the Act 11 & 12 Vict. c. 81, the limitation of the number of deck passengers brought in steamers from Ireland. This is a measure demanded by common humanity, as well as by sound policy, as it regards the towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire. It would be out of place to do more than to state the amount of evil which the inhabitants of Liverpool have to bear, arising out of the unfortunate state of Ireland; I do not, therefore, attempt to offer any opinion about the matter, but I do most anxiously represent to you the great danger, moral as well as physical, which cannot but be generated by allowing the continued unchecked immigration of the miserable of the Irish people into such towns as Liverpool.

The inhabitants feel the pecuniary cost as a sore evil; but they also feel and fear other results which may permanently deteriorate the condition, the habits, and the morals of the labouring classes of their own countrymen.

I am, &c.

Right Hon. Sir G. Grey, Bart.
&c. &c.

(signed) Edward Rushton.

EDWARD HUSHTON, ESQUIRE.

COPY of a Letter addressed to Her Majesty's
SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPART-
MENT, by *Edward Hushton, Esquire*, Specially
Majestric of *Exeter*, bearing date first April
1849.

(*Mr. Cardwell.*)

Ordered by The House of Commons to be Printed,
7 May 1849.

206.

Under 105.